

more false in itself, or more dishonourable to the cause of true religion, has not been conceived in the mind of man."

"The Bible instructs us, that man and other living things, have been placed but a few years upon the earth; and the physical monuments of the world bear witness to the same truth. If the Astronomer tells us of myriads of worlds not spoken of in the sacred records; the Geologist, in like manner proves (not by arguments from analogy, but by the incontrovertible evidence of physical phenomena [presented to the plain cognizance of our senses]) that there were former conditions of our planet, separated from each other by vast intervals of time, during which man, and the other creatures of his own date, had not been called into being. Periods such as these belong not, therefore, to the moral history of our race; and come within neither the letter nor the spirit of revelation. Between the first creation of the earth and that day in which it pleased God to place man upon it, who shall dare to define the interval? On this question Scripture is silent: but that silence destroys not the meaning of those physical monuments of his power which God has put before our eyes, giving us, at the same time, faculties whereby we may interpret them and comprehend their meaning.

"In the present condition of our knowledge, a statement like this is surely enough to satisfy the reasonable scruples of a religious man. But let us, for a moment, suppose that there are some religious difficulties in the conclusions of Geology: how then are we to solve them?—Not by shutting our eyes to facts, or denying the evidence of our senses; but by patient investigation carried on in the sincere love of truth, and by learning to reject every consequence not warranted by direct physical evidence. Pursued in this spirit, Geology can neither lead to any false conclusions nor offend against any religious truth. And this is the spirit in which many men have of late years followed this delightful science; devoting the best labours of their lives to its cultivation; turning over the successive leaves of nature's book, and interpreting her language, which they know to be a physical revelation of God's will; patiently working their way through investigations requiring much toil of both mind and body; accepting hypotheses only as a means of connecting disjointed phenomena, and rejecting them when they become unfitted for that office, so as, in the end, to build only upon facts and true natural causes. All this they have done, and are still doing: so that, however unfinished may be the fabric they have attempted to rear, its foundations are laid upon a rock.—

"But there is another class of men, who pursue Geology by a nearer road and are guided by a different light. Well-intentioned